

ANNUAL REPORT

FURNISHED TO THE

URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

OF WEDNESFIELD

FOR THE YEAR 1896

BY

ARTHUR HANDS

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

WOLVERHAMPTON

PRINTED BY CULLWICK BROTHERS MARKET STREET

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Medical Officer's Annual Report

1896.

BICKFORD HARBOUR,

HEATH TOWN.

Feb. 5th, 1897.

MR. CHAIRMAN AND GENTLEMEN,

In presenting my Report for the year 1896, the Council is to be congratulated on the pleasing characteristics of the year, viz: little comparative sickness—especially of a zymotic nature,—and a consequent low death rate.

POPULATION.—The estimated population of Wednesfield to middle of June is 4,517.

DEATHS.—Seventy-one deaths took place, and give a death ratio of 13·2 per thousand persons. They took place from the following causes:—Membranous Croup 2; Cancer 4; Marasmous 2; Senile Decay 1; Whooping Cough 5; Diarrhœa 4; Phthisis 3; Bronchial Affections 18; Heart Disease 3; Influenza 1; Injuries 1; and all other diseases 27.

Twenty-two died under the age of 1 year; 14 between the ages of 1 and 5 years; 2 between 5 and 15; 6 between 15 and 25; 19 between 25 and 65 years; and 8 at the age of 65 and upwards: and 7 persons attained the following advanced ages, viz:—71, 72, 74, 75, 81, and 87 respectively. Forty-seven deaths occurred in Wednesfield proper; 13 in the Wood End district; 9 at March End; and 2 at the Scotlands.

Inquests were held in six cases, and the following verdicts returned:—That four of these died from Natural Causes; one from Poisoning with Strychnine; and one from Injuries received by being thrown accidentally from a vehicle.

In the month of April the death rate was the lowest ever recorded, viz:—8·1 per thousand.

BIRTHS.—Seventy-five boys and 67 girls were born during the year, making 142 in all;—which numbers give a rate of 31·4 per thousand. There were exactly twice as many births as deaths.

TRADE.—There has not been nearly as much poverty as in some former years, and trade generally appears to be better in the district, as evinced by the fewer notes for medical and general relief obtained during the year;—only about one hundred out of a population of forty-five hundreds—this appears to point to improved conditions in the circumstances of the people.

NEW BUILDINGS —There has been very little building done during the year.

VACCINATION.—This is much more satisfactory than at the time of my report of my Annual Report for the year 1895, and considerably more children have been brought to the public vaccination station.

Since the report of the Royal Commission on vaccination was issued, nothing but calf lymph has been used here, in accordance with the recommendations therein contained, and with the most gratifying results, as the parents of the children are beginning to realise the superiority of this plan over the older method of arm-to-arm vaccination, and do not seem so much afraid of bad results following, in the shape of inflamed arms, or tiresome skin diseases, and so have more confidence in the operation, and so come up in increasing numbers. It seems rather an anomaly that the prevention of all other diseases but Small Pox should be controlled by sanitary authorities, and that almost the chief of all should be in the hands of Boards of Guardians! It is the opinion of many Medical Officers of Health, as well as my own, that this should be remedied so as to place the prevention of all diseases under one authority only.

ZYMOTIC DISEASE.—This class of disease has fortunately been less than in some former years, but still twelve deaths resulted from such complaints,—giving a rate of 2·8 per thousand of the population. The deaths include 2 from Croup; 1 from Influenza; and 5 from Whooping Cough;—this latter affection being rather prevalent in the first and second quarters of the year.

NOTIFICATIONS.—Four cases of Scarlatina, 4 of Erysipelas; and 3 of Diphtheria were notified—all of which terminated in recovery. Two of the children affected with Scarlatina were treated in the Isolation Hospital, but as sufficient means of isolation were at hand the remaining two were attended to at their own homes, being very mild attacks.

The Council will recollect Dr. Geo. Reid, the Medical

Officer for the County, estimated that the adoption of the Notifications Act would not be an expensive matter, and would not cost on an average more than £5 per annum. So far the cost has been much less than this amount, viz: 27/6, and no doubt the Council will consider this money well spent if it will prevent in some measure the spread of such a contagious disease as Scarlatina, and which is so often fatal.

SEWERAGE.—As the Council has now taken this matter seriously in hand, no remarks are called for at present, except to express the hope that the step will make Wednesfield even more healthy than it now is; and it will probably help, in this direction particularly, with reference to the disease of Phthisis, from which three fatal cases are again recorded this year—there are never less than this number—by making the sub-soil dryer. It has been found that it is much more prevalent in damp than dry situations.

COTTAGE HOMES.—The health of the children here has been fairly good, although there have been a considerable number of children suffering from skin affections; but there are not nearly so many cases as formerly. There have been few diseases of a Zymotic nature—one or two of Mumps, Erysipelas, and Diarrhœa being the chief—although there was a rather sharp outbreak of Chicken Pox in December, and had there been no facilities for the isolation of the first cases occurring, it would no doubt have rapidly spread to many of the children there. The children as a rule look well,—some of them being the picture of health,—and do much credit to the attention bestowed upon them by the Committee, aided by the Superintendent of the Homes. Each child is vaccinated, or re-vaccinated, as the case may require, on its first admission, and all in the Homes have undergone this

slight, but most beneficent operation.

ISOLATION HOSPITAL.—Two children (as before mentioned) have been treated here for Scarlatina, with a happy termination in each case.

MAKING AND CURBING OF ROAD.—Graisely Lane and the North Road are in a terrible state during the winter months, and the Council will perhaps take into consideration whether they cannot have them made, curbed, and channelled, which would be an immense improvement, both as regards the comfort of those compelled to use the roads, and to the health of those living along them.

At the end of the Report will be found Tables A. B. and C., which will give in a tabular manner the statistics required by the Local Government Board and the County Council.

In conclusion, the Council should be thanked for the consideration they give to the reports furnished to them from time to time by the Medical Officer, and should be congratulated on their endeavours to promote the public health of the District.

I am, Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

ARTHUR HANDS.

J. W. STIRK, Esq.,

CLERK TO THE DISTRICT COUNCIL
OF WEDNESFIELD.

TABLE A.

Shewing the Deaths classified according to Diseases,
and Ages, &c.

At all ages.	Under One Year.	One and under Five.	Five and under Fifteen.	Fifteen and under Twentyfive	Twentyfive and under Sixtyfive.	Sixtyfive and upwards
71	22	14	2	6	19	8

DEATHS.

					Under 5.	Over 5.
From Smallpox	..	..	.		0	0
„ Scarlatina	..	..	..		0	0
„ Diphtheria		..	..		0	0
„ Membranous Croup		..	..		2	0
„ Cancer	..	..	..		0	4
„ Enteric or Typhoid Fever			..		0	0
„ Continued Fever		..	..		0	0
„ Marasmus	..	..			2	0
„ Puerperal Fever		..	..		0	0
„ Senile Decay	..	..	..		0	1
„ Erysipelas	..	..	..		0	0
„ Measles	..	..	..		0	0
„ Whooping Cough		..	..		5	0
„ Diarrhœa and Dysentery			..		3	1
„ Rheumatic Fever		..	..		0	0
„ Phthisis	..		..		0	3
„ Bronchitis, Pneumonia & Pleurisy					12	6
„ Heart Diseases		..	..		1	2
„ Influenza	..	..	..		0	1
„ Injuries	..	..	..		0	1
„ All other Diseases		..	..		15	12
Total					40	31

Deaths :—Equal to a Death-rate of 13·2 per thousand.

Births : Males	75	} equal to a Birth-rate of 31·4 per thousand.
„ Females	67	
Total	141	

Population, Midsummer, 1896 .. 4,517.

Area in Acres .. 2,539.

TABLE B.**New Cases of Sickness.**

Diphtheria	..	..	3	Phthisis	..	..	3
Scarlatina	..	..	4	Influenza	..		11
Marasmus	..	..	1	Chest Affections		..	17
Membranous Croup	..		2	Diarrhoea	..	..	2
Febricular	..	..	8	Measles	..	..	1
Erysipelas	..	..	1	Whooping Cough		..	9
Mumps	..	..	2				<u>64</u>

The Notification of Infectious Diseases is
Compulsory.

Measles and Whooping Cough are not included among
the Diseases notified.

An Isolation Hospital is available for the District.

Area of District in acres, 2,539.

TABLE C.

List of Nuisances dealt with.

			Inspections and Observations made.	Notice served.	Nuisance abated.
Dwelling Houses and Schools—					
Foul Conditions	..	..	4	2	2
Structural Defects	..	..	0	0	0
Overcrowding	..	..	8	4	4
Unfit for Habitation	..	..	0	0	0
Lodging Houses	..	..	0	0	0
Dairies and Milkshops			Inspections made, but no record kept.		
Cowsheds	..	..	..	..	..
Bakehouses	..	..	..	..	..
Slaughterhouses	..	..	12	1	1
Canal Boats	..	..	0	0	0
Ashpits and Privies	..	..	114	24	114
Deposits of Manure	..	..	16	8	8
Water Closets	..	..	0	0	0
House Drainage—					
Defective Traps	..	..	4	2	2
No Disconnection	..	..	0	0	0
Other Faults	..	..	34	17	17
Water Supply	..	..	2	1	1
Pigstys	..	..	18	9	9
Animals improperly kept	..	..	0	0	0
Offensive Trades	..	..	0	0	0
Smoke Nuisance	..	..	0	0	0
Other Nuisances	..	..	4	2	2
—					
Total	..	..	216	70	160

JOSEPH TOMKYS,

Inspector of Nuisances.

